THE TENTH DAY.

4th March 1920.

The Assembly met at 12-30 P. M. on Thursday, the 4th March 1920.

158. Some practical suggestions for the elevation of the depressed classes.

Mr. T. K. Madhavan (Member, Nominated) spoke first about the disabilities of backward classes arising from absence of landed properties. They formed about six lakhs in the whole State. He then described what, according to his information, was being done for them in Mysore, Baroda and elsewhere. The scheme propounded by the Member was that 1000 acres of waste land should be set apart for them and cultivated every year with tapioca by the depressed classes, the initial cost of such cultivation being met by Government. According to Dr. Barker, the Director of Industries, the net profit from one acre of land cultivated with tapioca was Rs. 85. At that rate the net profit on 1,000 acres would be Rs. 85,000. After crediting to Government the cost of cultivation and other expenditure incurred, the balance should be ear-marked for starting schools and otherwise ameliorating their material condition. A starting fund could thus be secured which could be utilised for the further prosecution of the scheme explained by the Member. The landless people would thus become landed proprietors who would form a separate colony. They should then be provided with hospitals, temples, &c. In regard to admission of the depressed classes into Government schools, a good deal had been done; still there were a few schools where admission was refused. All schools should be freely thrown open without restriction of any kind. Their grievance in respect of Government appointments was even now keen. In spite of specific and stringent orders issued by Government, the departmental officers were not as earnest as the Government in carrying out instructions issued. The Deputy Director of Public Instruction, it was worthy of note, had been proceeding on the principle of giving Ezhavas a definite percentage of appointments and the Member thanked him for it. In view of the fact that some men from the depressed classes had done well in the army in connection with the European war, it was not plain why the Nair Brigade should not be thrown open to them. The Member then complained about the non-admission of Ezhavas into the College Hostel and said that there were 60 Ezhava students who were now living in quarters where they had to spend Rs. 25 each every month for food alone. Besides, they were being denied all other advantages of a Government Hostel such as medical aid, library, tuition, &c. The Member requested that, when the new hostel buildings were completed, Ezhavas too should be given admission. Touching the question of *theendal*, the Member elaborately argued that it was for Government to abolish it, though it was a matter set up by the various people in the State. A continuance of the observance of *theendal* would drive the already suffering section of His Highness the Maha Raja's subjects to despair. As Hindus, they were entitled to be treated on an equal footing with other sections. Again, it was inconsistent with the traditions of the Hindu State not to treat all Hindus alike, as otherwise they were likely to renounce their religion which in time would seriously affect the numerical strength of the Hindus. In the interests of fair play, justice and humanity and in the sacred name of Hinduism, the Member appealed for a reconsideration of the reply given to the deputation.

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which fact was responsible for[illegible]gard to the Hostel, admission will be given to Ezhavas completed. The other points are noted.

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